

Deg Xinag language

Deg Xinag is a Northern Athabascan language spoken by the Deg Hit'an peoples of the GASH region. The GASH region consists of the villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross along the lower Yukon River in Interior Alaska. The language is severely endangered;^[4] out of an ethnic population of approximately 250 people, only 14 people still speak the language.^[5]

The language was referred to as **Ingalik** by Osgood (1936). While this term sometimes still appears in the literature, it is today considered pejorative. The word "Ingalik" is from the Yup'ik Eskimo language: *Inqiliq*, meaning "Indian".

Engithidong Xugixudhoy (Their Stories of Long Ago), a collection of traditional folk tales in Deg Xinag by the elder Belle Deacon, was published in 1987 by the Alaska Native Language Center.^[6] A literacy manual with accompanying audiotapes was published in 1993.

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Dialects

There are two main dialects: *Yukon* and *Kuskokwim*. The Yukon dialect (Yukon Deg Xinag, Yukon Ingalik) is the traditional language of the villages of the Lower Yukon River (Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross).^[7] As of 2009, there are no longer any speakers living in Anvik and Holy Cross. The other dialect (Kuskokwim Deg Xinag, Kuskokwim Ingalik) is the traditional language of the settlements of Middle Kuskokwim.^[8]

Phonology

Consonants

Here is the list of consonant sounds in Deg Xinag orthography, accompanied by their pronunciation noted in brackets in IPA:^[9]

Deg Xinag	
Deg Hit'an	
Native to	United States
Region	Alaska (lower Yukon River, Anvik River, Innoko River)
Ethnicity	280 Deg Hit'an (2007) ^[1]
Native speakers	40 ^[1]
Language family	<div>Dené–Yeniseian? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Na-Dené<ul style="list-style-type: none">Athabaskan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northern Athabaskan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Deg Xinag</div>
Writing system	Latin (Northern Athabaskan alphabet)
Official status	
Official language in	 Alaska ^[2]
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	ing
Glottolog	dege1248 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/dege1248) ^[3]

Consonants in Deg Xinag

		<u>Labial</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>		<u>Post-alveolar</u>	<u>Retroflex</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Uvular</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
				central	lateral						
<u>Plosive</u>	plain	b [p]		d [t]					g [k]	Ḡ [q]	ʼ [ʔ]
	aspirated	p [pʰ]		t [tʰ]					k [kʰ]	q [qʰ]	
	ejective			tʼ [tʰʼ]					kʼ [kʰʼ]	qʼ [qʰʼ]	
<u>Affricate</u>	plain		ddh [tθ]	dz [ts]	dl [tɬ]	j [tʃ]	dr [tʂ]				
	aspirated		tth [tθʰ]	ts [tsʰ]	tɬ [tɬʰ]	ch [tʃʰ]	tr [tʂʰ]				
	ejective		tthʼ [tθʰʼ]	tsʼ [tsʰʼ]	tɬʼ [tɬʰʼ]	chʼ [tʃʰʼ]	trʼ [tʂʰʼ]				
<u>Fricative</u>	voiceless		th [θ]	s [s]	ɬ [ɬ]	sh [ʃ]	sr [ʂ]			x [χ]	h [h]
	voiced	v [v]	dh [ð]	z [z]			zr [ʐ]	yh [j]		gh [ɣ]	
<u>Nasal</u>	voiced	m [m]		n [n]					ng [ŋ]		
	voiceless	mh [m̥]		nh [n̥]					ngh [ŋ̊]		
	glottalized	mʼ [mʔ]		nʼ [nʔ]					ngʼ [ŋʔ]		
<u>Approximant</u>	voiced				l [l]			y [j]			
	glottalized							yʼ [jʔ]			

In final position, consonant sounds /t, tθ, ts, tɬ, tʃ, k, q/ are voiced as [d, dð, dz, dʒ, dʒ, g, ɣ].

Vowels

Vowels in Deg Xinag are [a e ə o ʊ].

Examples

- *qʼuntʼogh* airplane
- *ggagg* animal
- *ggagg chux* bear (lit. 'big animal')
- *sraqay* children
- *dran* day
- *xikʼugilʼanh* doctor, nurse
- *legg* fish
- *lek* dog
- *sileg* my dog
- *vileg* her dog
- *tso tlʼogh iy* mammoth
- *dinaʼ kʼidz* doll (lit. 'little person')
- *xidondiditey* door

- *ngan* ' dit 'anh earthquake
- *sito* ' my father
- *vito* ' her father
- *yix* house
- *tin*h ice
- *dangan* iron, metal
- *deloy* mountain
- *vanhgiq* Indian ice cream
- *choghlu*guy (in Anvik) ; niq'asrt'ay (in Shageluk) fox
- *vinixi*lyiq in the morning
- *gili*q one
- *te*qa two
- *to*gg three
- *den*hch 'e four
- *ni*lq 'osnal *gili*ggi *vi*q 'idz iy eleven^[10]

References

1. Deg Xinag (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/ing/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/04/21/305688602/alaska-oks-bill-making-native-languages-official>
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Degexit'an" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/dege1248>). *Glottolog* 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. "Did you know Deg Xinag is severely endangered?" (<http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/2371>). *Endangered Languages*. Retrieved 2019-10-18.
5. Krauss, Michael E (2007) "Native languages of Alaska". In: *The Vanishing Voices of the Pacific Rim*, ed. by Osahito Miyaoko, Osamu Sakiyama, and Michael E. Krauss. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Table 21.1, page 408)
6. Deacon, Belle & James Kari. 1987. *Engithidong Xugixudhoy* (Their Stories of Long Ago.). Alaska Native Language Archive.[1] (<http://www.uaf.edu/anla/item.xml?id=IK987D1987>)
7. Leonard, Beth R. (2007). *Deg Xinag Oral Traditions: Reconnecting Indigenous Language And Education Through Traditional Narratives* (<https://scholarworks.alaska.edu:443/handle/11122/8930>) (Thesis thesis).
8. Sharon Hargus 2009. Vowel quality and duration in Yukon Deg Xinag (http://faculty.washington.edu/sharon/Vowel_quality_and_duration_in_Deg_Xinag.pdf), University of Washington
9. Hargus, Sharon (2009). *Vowel quality and duration in Yukon Deg Xinag*. University of Washington.
10. [ankn.uaf.edu: Deg Xinag Alixi Ni'elyoy / Deg Xinag Learners' Dictionary](http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANL/course/view.php?id=7) (2007) (<http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANL/course/view.php?id=7>)

External links

- Alaskan Native Language Center (<http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/>).
- Deg Xinag - Language of the Deg Hit'an (http://www.alaskool.org/language/Athabaskan/deg_xinag/)
- Deg Xinag (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080509104008/http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/langs/dx.html>) (ANLC)
- Deg Xinag Resources (http://www.uaf.edu/anla/collections/deg_xinag/) at the Alaska Native Language Archive (<http://www.uaf.edu/anla/>) (ANLA)
- Rescuing a language: College course unites far-flung students and elders in an effort to save Deg Xinag (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070219040407/http://www.adn.com/life/story/1994446p-2096145c.html>)

- Word-Lists of the Athabaskan, Yup'ik and Alutiiq Languages (http://www.asna.ca/alaska/research/zago_skin.pdf) by Lt. Laurence Zagoskin, 1847 (containing Deg Xinag on pages 3–8)
- The Order for Morning Prayer (http://mammana.org/bcp/deg_xinag/), translated by John Wight Chapman in 1896, digitized by Richard Mammana 2010
- Degexit'an basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database (<http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/responde.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\inde\pca&first=0>)
- Deg Xinag language, alphabet and pronunciation (<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/degxinag.htm>)

Further reading

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